



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

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September 26, 2008

Public Health & Emergency Preparedness Bulletin: # 2008:38 **Reporting for the week ending 09/20/08 (MMWR Week #38)**

CURRENT HOMELAND SECURITY THREAT LEVELS

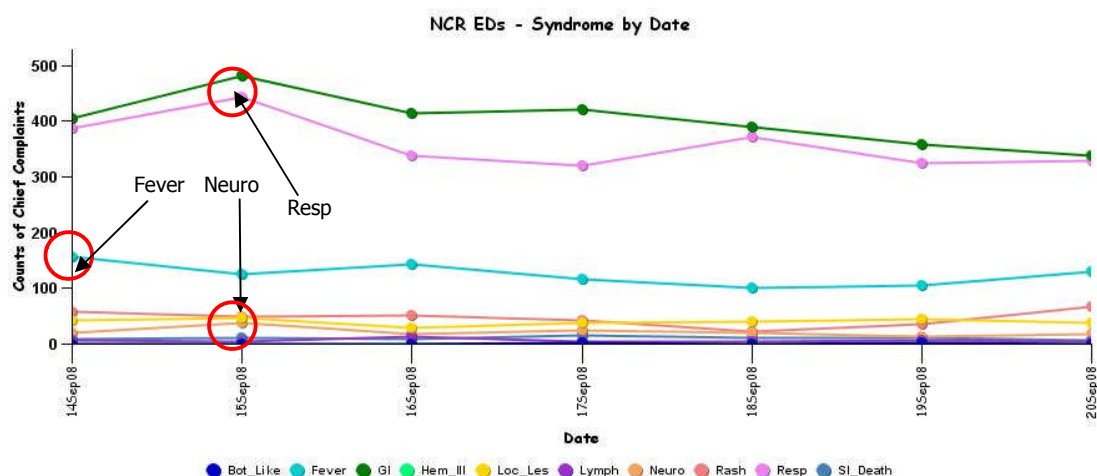
National: Yellow (ELEVATED) *The threat level in the airline sector is Orange (HIGH)
Maryland: Yellow (ELEVATED)

SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE REPORTS

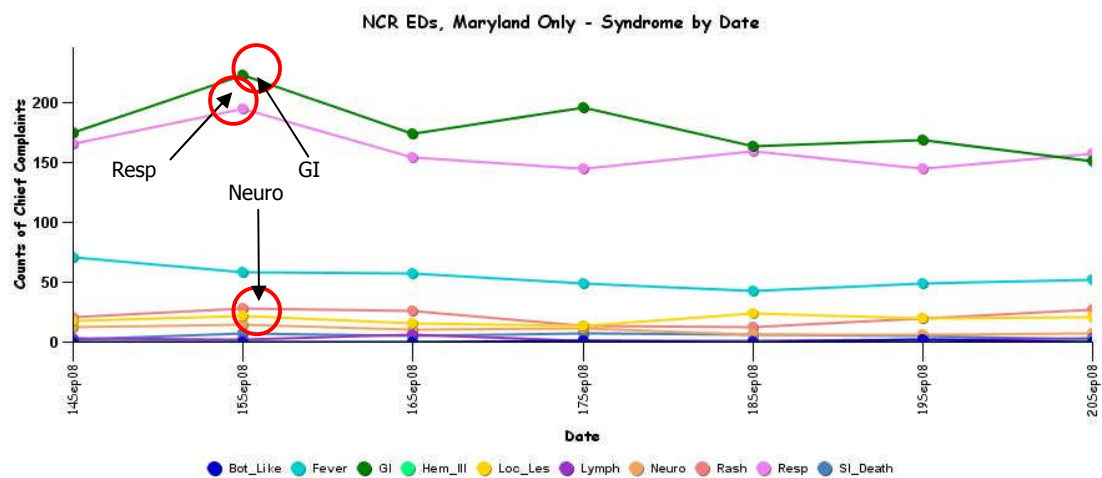
ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics):

Graphical representation is provided for all syndromes, excluding the "Other" category, all age groups, and red alerts only. Note: ESSENCE – ANCR Spring 2006 (v 1.3) now uses syndrome categories consistent with CDC definitions.

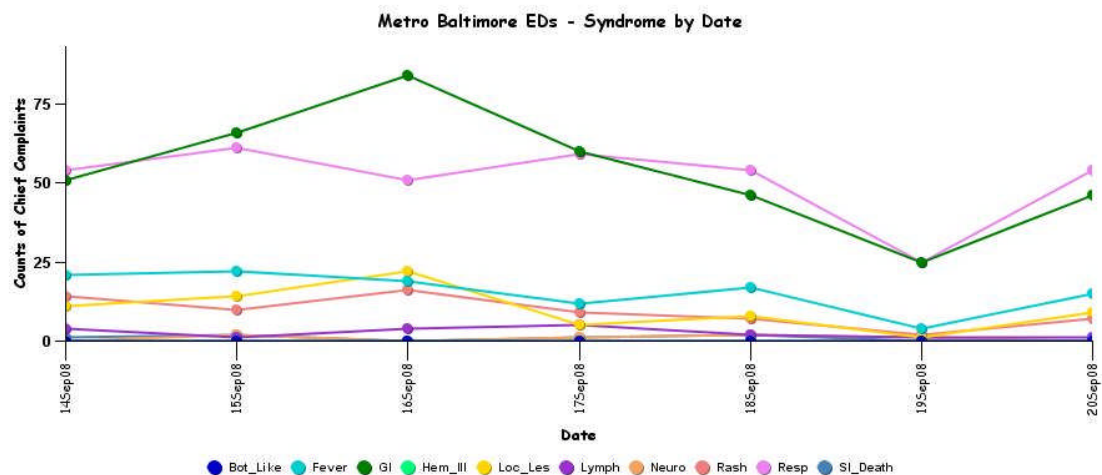
Overall, no suspicious patterns of illness were identified. Track backs to the health care facilities yielded no suspicious patterns of illness.



* Includes EDs in all jurisdictions in the NCR (MD, VA, DC) under surveillance in the ESSENCE system



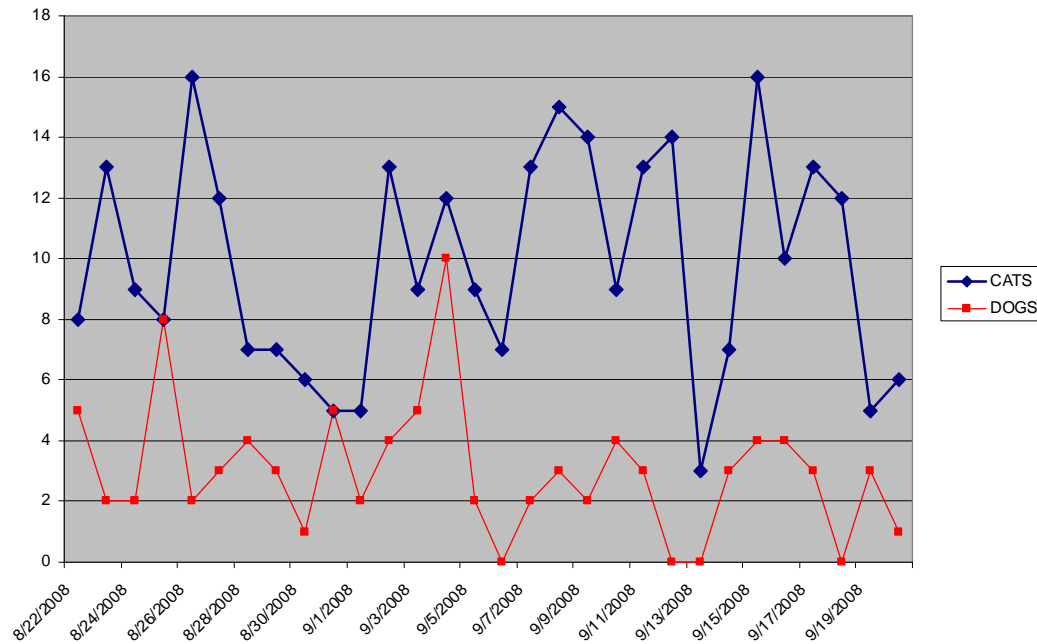
* Includes only Maryland EDs in the NCR (Prince George's and Montgomery Counties) under surveillance in the ESSENCE system



* Includes EDs in the Metro Baltimore region (Baltimore City and Baltimore County) under surveillance in the ESSENCE system.

BALTIMORE CITY SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE PROJECT: No suspicious patterns in the medic calls, ED Syndromic Surveillance and the animal carcass surveillance. Graphical representation is provided for animal carcass surveillance 311 data.

Dead Animal Pick-Up Calls to 311

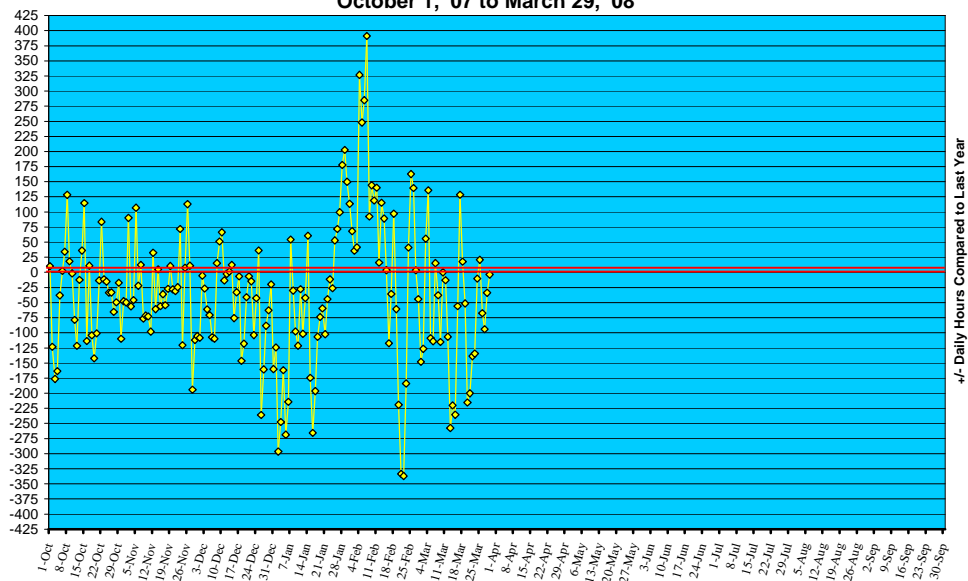


REVIEW OF EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT UTILIZATION

YELLOW ALERT TIMES (ED DIVERSION): The reporting period begins 10/01/06.

*Note: No new data available at this time.

**Statewide Yellow Alert Comparison
Daily Historical Deviations
October 1, '07 to March 29, '08**



REVIEW OF MORTALITY REPORTS

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner: OCME reports no suspicious deaths related to BT for the week.

MARYLAND TOXIDROMIC SURVEILLANCE

Poison Control Surveillance Monthly Update: Investigations of the outliers and alerts observed by the Maryland Poison Center and National Capital Poison Center in August 2008 did not identify any cases of possible terrorism events.

REVIEW OF MARYLAND DISEASE SURVEILLANCE FINDINGS

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE CASE REPORTS (confirmed, probable and suspect):

Meningitis:	<u>Aseptic</u>	<u>Meningococcal</u>
New cases (Sept 14 – 20, 2008):	12	1
Prior week (Sept 7 – 13, 2008):	16	0
Week#38, 2007 (Sept 16 - 22, 2007):	24	0

OUTBREAKS: 6 outbreaks were reported to DHMH during MMWR Week 38 (Sep. 14- Sep. 20, 2008):

3 Gastroenteritis outbreaks

- 1 outbreak of GASTROENTERITIS associated with a Daycare
- 1 outbreak of GASTROENTERITIS associated with a Camp
- 1 outbreak of GASTROENTERITIS associated with a Nursing Home

1 Foodborne Gastroenteritis outbreak

- 1 outbreak of FOODBORNE GASTROENTERITIS associated with a Facility

2 Respiratory illness outbreaks

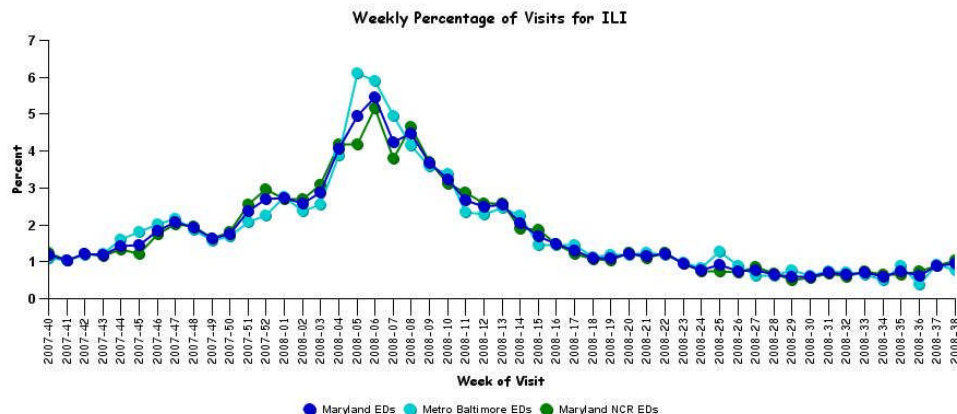
- 1 outbreak of PNEUMONIA associated with a Nursing Home
- 1 outbreak of PNEUMONIA associated with a School

MARYLAND SEASONAL FLU STATUS:

Seasonal Influenza reporting occurs October through May.

SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS:

Graph shows the percentage of total weekly Emergency Department patient chief complaints that have one or more ICD9 codes representing provider diagnoses of influenza-like illness. This graph does not represent confirmed influenza.



PANDEMIC INFLUENZA UPDATE / AVIAN INFLUENZA-RELATED REPORTS

WHO Pandemic Influenza Phase: Phase 3/4: No or very little human-to-human transmission/Small clusters with limited human-to-human transmission, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans

US Pandemic Influenza Stage: Stage 0/1: New domestic animal outbreak in at-risk country/Suspected human outbreak overseas

*More information regarding WHO Pandemic Influenza Phase and US Pandemic Influenza Stage can be found at: <http://bioterrorism.dhmm.state.md.us/flu.htm>

WHO update: As of September 10, 2008, the WHO-confirmed global total of human cases of H5N1 avian influenza virus infection stands at 387, of which 245 have been fatal. Thus, the case fatality rate for human H5N1 is about 63%.

AVIAN INFLUENZA, LOW PATHOGENIC H5N1, DUCK (New Zealand): 18 Sep 2008. Low levels of the H5N1 virus have been found in 2 samples taken from Mallard ducks in New Zealand. It came from a surveillance program researching the presence of avian influenza. Known as LPAI (low pathogenic avian influenza) H5N1, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry says it is different to "bird flu," which is the highly pathogenic form of the virus. Spokesman Dr Andre van Haldren says the samples were taken from healthy birds and there have been no reported bird deaths or disease. He says this confirms that strains of non disease causing avian influenza viruses are present in our wild bird populations.

AVIAN INFLUENZA, H5N1 CONFIRMED (Togo): 17 Sept 2008. Togo state television says lab tests performed after a recent outbreak of bird flu have confirmed the presence of the deadly H5N1 strain of the virus, which has the potential to infect humans. No human cases have been detected so far in Togo, however. State media reported Monday 15 Sep 2008 the lab tests were carried out by experts in Ghana and Italy after the outbreak was discovered last week among several thousand birds in Agbata outside the capital, Lome. The Health Ministry says "precautionary measures have been taken to contain the situation."

NATIONAL DISEASE REPORTS:

BOTULISM, HUMAN, HOME CANNED GREEN BEANS (Ohio): 19 Sep 2008. A man and his grandson remain in the hospital after coming down with food-borne botulism last weekend (13-14 Sep 2008). The man is listed in critical condition at MedCentral/Mansfield Hospital and his grandson is in serious condition at Akron Children's Hospital after eating home-canned green beans. 2 granddaughters also were treated for botulism and have been released from Akron Children's. Stephanie Zmuda, Environmental Health Director at the Galion City Health Department, said after 10 years in the field, this is the first time she's dealt with such cases of contamination. "Botulism is a type of food poisoning and is the most dangerous," she said. "6 organisms is the infectious dose, so just a little bit of this germ can get you sick. You do not have to have a whole serving of the food to get sick." (Botulism is listed in Category A on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

E. COLI VTEC NON-O157, RESTAURANT (Oklahoma): 16 Sep 2008. The Oklahoma E. coli [O111] outbreak continues to get worse as the total number of cases is now near 300. Oklahoma state health officials increased the number of confirmed cases this past weekend to 291. This marks a huge spike in the number of cases, as well under 250 were reported just days ago. The outbreak has been linked to those who ate at the Country Cottage restaurant in Locust Grove, OK. Out of the 291 sickened by the E. coli outbreak, 227 are adults while 46 are children. So far, around 70 people or so have had to be hospitalized. One person, a young man, has died. (Food Safety Threats are listed in Category B on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

SALMONELLOSIS SCHWARZENGRUND, HUMAN, DOG FOOD, RECALL (United States): 15 Sep 2008. Two isolated cases of a type of bacterium known as Salmonella enterica serotype Schwarzengrund in humans has caused a Pennsylvania pet food manufacturer to recall a number of dry dog and cat food brands nationwide. Mars Inc.'s Mars Petcare is recalling cat and dog food made at its Everson, PA facility, according to wire service reports. While Mars Inc. maintained that no direct connection has been made between illness in either animals or humans and its pet food product, the possibility that 2 humans may have contracted salmonella caused the recall, which began at the beginning of August 2008. The latest announcement expanded the pet food brands being recalled to include some Pedigree brands, Country Acres, Retriever, Doggy Bag, Members Mark, Natural, Ol' Roy, Special Kitty, Paws & Claws, Wegman's, Pet Pride, PMI Nutrition and Red Flannel. Consumers should look for "17" as the 1st 2 digits of the 2nd line on the Universal Price Code. Pedigree products will have "PAE" on the bottom line. Consumers can also call 1-877-568-4463 for more information. (Food Safety Threats are listed in Category B on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

HANTAVIRUS (Utah): 14 Sep 2008. A Utah man died of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome after apparent exposure to rodent droppings, health officials said Thursday 11 Sep 2008. The last confirmed hantavirus infection in Utah occurred in 2004, the Utah Department of Health said. The man, a resident of Duchesne County between the ages of 19-29 years, appeared to be otherwise healthy before he became ill. He was hospitalized on 2 Sep 2008 and died the next day. Health

officials are investigating the death but suspect the man was exposed to hantavirus while cleaning up rodent droppings. Hantaviruses are shed in the urine and fecal droppings of rodents. Humans can become infected by inhaling dust that contains dried contaminated rodent urine or feces. The health department said extreme care should be taken when cleaning up rodent droppings. (Emerging Infectious Diseases are listed in Category C on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

INTERNATIONAL DISEASE REPORTS:

ANTHRAX, BOVINE (Finland): 19 Sep 2008. A young bull in Orimattila in southern Finland was diagnosed with anthrax late on Thursday 18 Sep 2008. The previous documented anthrax infection was in 2004 at the same farm, which has about 20 head of dairy cattle. The province's head veterinarian was alerted to the farm to establish the source of the contagion and order decontamination measures. (Anthrax is listed in Category A on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

DAIRY PRODUCTS, INFANT MILK, INTERNATIONAL RECALL (China): 18 Sep 2008. Hong Kong ordered the recall of a Chinese company's products on Thursday 18 Sep 2008 after tests found 8 out of 30 of its dairy offerings, including milk, ice cream and yoghurt, were contaminated with melamine - an organic base usually found in plastics and resins, and banned in food. The tests by Hong Kong's food safety watchdog are the 1st verification by an independent food safety watchdog that the melamine contamination health scandal had now spread to such a large range of other dairy products. Inner Mongolia Yili Industrial Group Co Ltd is one of 22 Chinese firms implicated in China's growing milk-powder contamination scandal. Milk powder containing melamine has killed 4 infants in China and made more than 6000 ill. The company was a Beijing Olympic Games sponsor. "We are recalling the Yili products, and the importer is also recalling all Yili products," said Constance Chan, the controller of Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety, after the latest round of test results of 30 samples of milk products. "That would involve milk, milk beverages, yoghurt, ice cream and ice bar," she added. "8 out of 30 products of Yili Company contain melamine." The announcement by the Hong Kong authorities could prove an embarrassment for China, which has so far failed to identify melamine contamination in dairy products other than milk powder. Last year (2007) domestic animals in the US died as a result of eating pet food imported from China, also contaminated by melamine. Hong Kong authorities said they would now systematically test all other China-produced dairy products made by other Chinese brands before deciding if further recalls might be necessary. "In the next few days, we will test all other mainland Chinese dairy products," Chan added. "Any Chinese milk powder no matter where it is made on the mainland will be tested." (Food Safety Threats are listed in Category B on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

BRUCELLOSIS, PORCINE (Germany): 18 Sep 2008. On an organic pig farm, in the Ludwigslust district in the southwest of the north German state of Mecklenburg/Western Pomerania, the entire pig population had to be killed following an outbreak of brucellosis. The news was published by the paper "Schweriner Volkszeitung" on Sat 13 Sep 2008. How the disease got onto the farm with locations in Bickhusen and Nostorf is not known. The disease was detected during routine checks in early August 2008. 400 breeding pigs were immediately killed and removed; the remaining 4400 pigs were kept until reaching the minimum weight of 15 kg and were then slaughtered and processed. Different variants of brucellosis affect cattle, pigs, or sheep. According to the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute, 5 outbreaks of brucellosis have been detected, thus far during 2008, on livestock farms in Germany. The Veterinary authorities consider that the most likely route of transmission was by wildlife, especially wild boar. Therefore, free-range animals are particularly affected by the disease. (Brucellosis is listed in Category B on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

ANTHRAX, HUMAN (Kyrgyzstan): 18 Sep 2008. Two outbreaks of anthrax have been reported in southern Kyrgyzstan, a source in the republic's emergencies ministry said on Tuesday 16 Sep 2008. The potentially fatal disease has been confirmed in 14 people, including several children, in the republic's Batken Region. All of them became infected after culling sick cattle. Six people have also been hospitalized after showing symptoms of the disease in the southwestern Jalal-Abad Region. The health of another 71 people is being monitored. (Anthrax is listed in Category A on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

FOODBORNE ILLNESS, HOTEL (Egypt): 15 Sep 2008. More than 80 Russian tourists vacationing at the Sheraton Sharm Resort in Egypt are believed to be suffering from food poisoning, a Moscow radio station said on Monday 15 Sep 2008, citing one of the victims. The Ekho Moskvyy radio station said it is not clear what caused the poisoning, but the tourists believe they fell ill after consuming contaminated food. "The tourists are suffering from the same symptoms: diarrhea, stomachaches, nausea, vomiting," Gleb Borisov told Ekho Moskvyy. "Some of them have been unable to leave their hotel rooms for a 3rd day already, although some are feeling a little better now." Borisov said that no major medical assistance had been given to the tourists, with hotel management reluctant to address the problem, advising the victims to contact their insurance companies. Russia's honorary consul to the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, Akhmed Semari, told RIA Novosti that the hotel management had denied there were any health issues at the resort. Semari said, citing the hotel, that 6 Russian tourists had been taken to an international medical clinic on Sunday 14 Sep 2008, adding that the results of tests would be available later on Monday. The 4-star Sheraton Sharm Hotel currently has around 600 tourists staying, he said. Russian operators have meanwhile suspended sales to the hotel until Egyptian health officials clear up the cause of the poisoning, a spokesperson for the Russian Tourist Industry Association said. "Some 100 tourists lodged complaints with their insurance companies over the weekend," Irina Tyurina said. "Sales of

tours to the hotel have been suspended, and tourists who bought holidays at the hotel will be accommodated in other hotels." She said Russian tourists are being relocated to other hotels. (Food Safety Threats are listed in Category B on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

ANTHRAX, HUMAN, LIVESTOCK (Afghanistan): 15 Sep 2008. Officials in Badakhshan province say dozens of people and cattle have contracted anthrax. Maulvi Fazl Rahman, a member of the Badakhshan Provincial Council, said on Saturday 13 Sep 2008 the disease had broken out in several villages of the Yawan district. Residents and health officials confirmed the spread of the fatal disease in Yustan, Tayal and Alat villages. Several animals died of the disease, while some people are under treatment in Badakhshan. A resident of Alat said 60 people had caught the ailment in his village alone. He demanded urgent medical aid from government and humanitarian agencies. Dr Najla Zarifi, medical superintendent of the Faizabad Civil Hospital, confirmed receiving dozens of anthrax patients, but she did not put a figure on them. The disease is not new in Badakhshan, as people with similar symptoms have been visiting hospitals for the last 6 months. Zarifi said 2 men from Argo district died of the bacterium last month. She sought immediate aid and medicine from the central government as well as international health organizations to prevent further spread of anthrax in the far-flung province. (Anthrax is listed in Category A on the CDC list of Critical Biological Agents) *Non-suspect case

National Preparedness Month (NPM):

September is the NPM, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Ready Campaign. NPM is held each September and is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities.

September 2008 is the fifth annual NPM. The month will focus on important preparedness steps including:

- **Get an Emergency Supply Kit**
- **Make a Family Emergency Plan**
- **Be Informed**
- **Get Involved**

Get Involved:

After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies by getting a kit, making a plan and being informed, take the next step and get involved in preparing your community. Learn more about Citizen Corps, which actively involves citizens in making our communities and our nation safer, stronger and better prepared.

We all have a role to play in keeping our hometowns secure from emergencies of all kinds. Citizen Corps works hard to help people prepare, train and volunteer in their communities. For more information, go to www.citizencorps.gov to get involved.

Please visit <http://www.ready.gov/> for more information.

OTHER RESOURCES AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

More information concerning Public Health and Emergency Preparedness can be found at the Office of Preparedness and Response website: <http://bioterrorism.dhmd.state.md.us/>

Thallium Poisoning from Eating Contaminated Cake - Iraq, 2008

MMWR 57(37); 1015-1018. This report summarizes the epidemiological investigation of 10 cases of thallium poisoning from eating contaminated cake in Iraq in January 2008. This suspected intentional poisoning was one of the largest known clusters of thallium poisoning, according to CDC. (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5737a3.htm>)

Effects of School Closures, 2008 Winter Influenza Season, Hong Kong

Emerg Infect Dis. 2008 Oct; [Epub ahead of print]. This article describes the effects of school closures in Hong Kong put in effect by public health officials for two weeks in March 2008 after three children died of seasonal influenza. (<http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/10/pdfs/08-0646.pdf>)

NOTE: This weekly review is a compilation of data from various surveillance systems, interpreted with a focus on a potential BT event. It is not meant to be inclusive of all epidemiology data available, nor is it meant to imply that every activity reported is a definitive BT event. International reports of outbreaks due to organisms on the CDC Critical Biological Agent list will also be reported. While not "secure", please handle this information in a professional manner. Please feel free to distribute within your organization, as you feel appropriate, to other professional staff involved in emergency preparedness and infection control.

For questions about the content of this review or if you have received this and do not wish to receive these weekly notices, please e-mail me. If you have information that is pertinent to this notification process, please send it to me to be included in the routine report.

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